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DEDICATION

TOWN HALL, SWANSEA, MASS.

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Massachusetts Historical
Society.

11 April, 1894.

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from

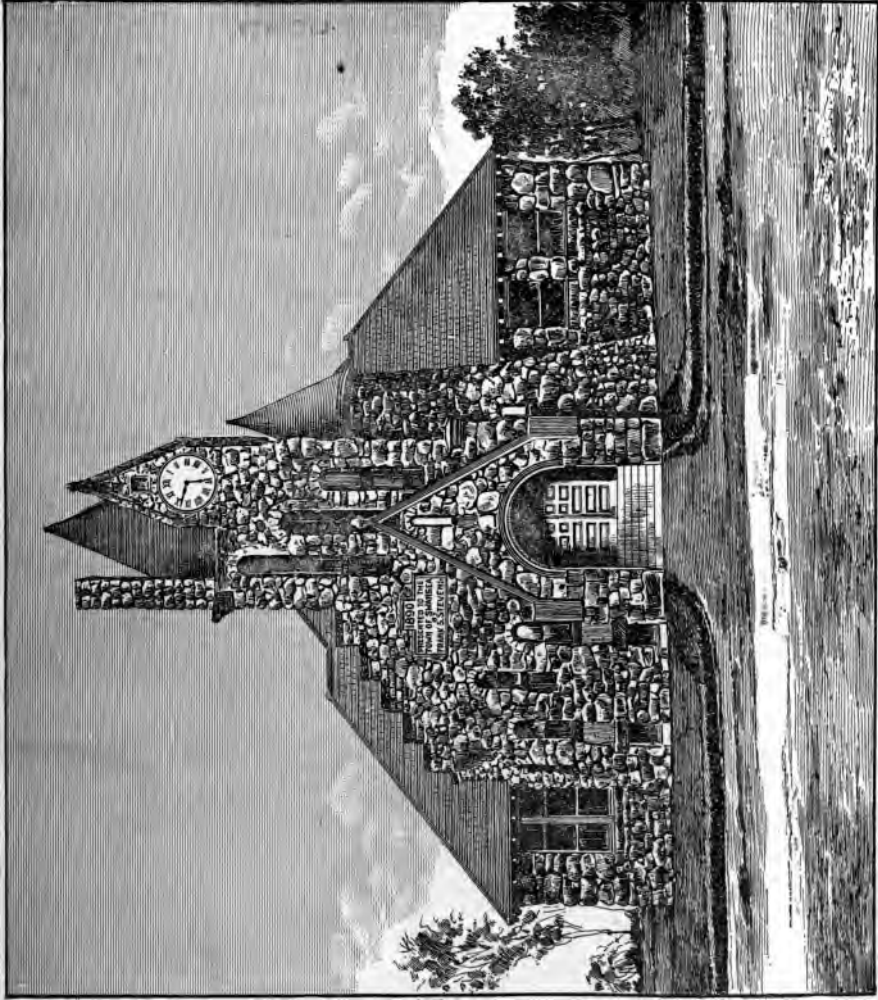
Hon. John. S. Bryant.

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TOWN HALL, SWANSEA, MASS.

PROCEEDINGS AND ADDRESSES

AT THE

DEDICATION

OF THE

TOWN HALL, IN SWANSEA,

MASS.,

ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1891.

FALL RIVER, MASS.:

ALMY & MILNE, FINE BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS,

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Am. Medical Soc.

SWANSEA, Oct. 1st, 1891.

MR. JOB GARDNER,

Chairman of Dedication Exercises of Swansea Town Hall :

Dear Sir :—At a meeting of the Board of Selectmen of Swansea, held this day, it was voted to request you to confer with the orator and other speakers who took part in the exercises at the dedication of the Town Hall, for permission to have their addresses printed and published in pamphlet form.

WILLIAM P. MASON, } Selectmen
DANIEL HALE, } of
SAMUEL G. ARNOLD, } Swansea.

SWANSEA, October 2nd, 1891.

MR. JOB GARDNER,

Dear Sir :—In behalf of the citizens of Swansea we request that you cause to be prepared and published a Memorial volume containing an account of the exercises which took place on Wednesday, Sept. 9, 1891, at the dedication of the Town Hall ; and also a copy of the deed given by the Hon. Frank S. Stevens to the town of Swansea.

WILLIAM P. MASON, } Selectmen
DANIEL HALE, } of
SAMUEL G. ARNOLD, } Swansea.

THE DEDICATION.

THE formal dedication of the handsome new Town Hall at Swansea village, the gift of HON. FRANK SHAW STEVENS, occurred on Wednesday, September Ninth, A. D. 1891, with appropriate and deeply interesting exercises.

It was a great occasion for the historic old town, and many of her sons and daughters who make their present home in other communities gathered from far and near to do honor to the occasion, and renew their allegiance to the town from which they went forth to the fields of their life's activities, with its trials and its triumphs.

The towns-people were early on the scene, and when Mr. Job Gardner opened the formal exercises at 11 o'clock, the hall was crowded to repletion with a noble gathering of the people of Swansea and their friends.

The weather was of a delightful character, clear, cool and inspiring, and this fact contributed much to the success of the occasion. The ladies of the town sent a committee to decorate and adorn the hall and its rooms with beautiful flowers. They did their work in an excellent manner, and the result was seen on the platform of the hall, in the public library and in the selectmen's room.

On the speaker's stand, in the center of the platform, was a basket of handsome flowers, while in the front was a row of beautiful potted plants. At each end was a bank of flowers,—ferns, golden rod, lilies, etc. These were arranged by Mrs. I. W. Pierce and Miss Laura E. Allen, while an attractive display of ferns and golden rod, with bright flowers to show a contrast, was placed in the selectmen's room and in the public library room by Miss Julia R. Wellington, the librarian, and her assistant, Miss Carrie A. Chase.

The exercises were announced to commence at eleven o'clock, but an hour before that time the hall was filled with a distinguished company of people, and late comers were obliged to stand either in the corridor or the rooms to be occupied by the selectmen and public library. While the people were gathering the Swansea Brass Band gave an interesting concert on the lawn in front of the hall.

Hooper's Steamer Puritan Orchestra rendered the following concert programme in a manner that elicited frequent applause and gave much pleasure to those who listened.

March—Steamer Puritan
 Overture—Auld Lang Syne D. Miller.
 Descriptive Piece—A Trip to Great Britain . . Loesch.
 Selection from "Faust" Gounod.
 Overture—Jubal Weber.

The following named gentlemen were seated upon the platform :

Mr. Job Gardner, president of the day ; Hon. Frank S. Stevens, the donor of the building ; Hon. John Summerfield Brayton, the orator of the day ; Rev. Percy S. Grant of Fall River, chaplain of the day ; the venerable Rev. Benjamin H. Chase of Swansea ; Maj. James Brown of Taunton, the first Swansea man to graduate from college ; Jonathan M.

Wood, Esq., of Fall River ; Hon. E. L. Barney of New Bedford ; D. A. Waldron of Barrington ; Edmund Arnold, Dr. J. M. Wellington, Obadiah Chase, E. M. Thurston, of Swansea ; Wm. P. Mason, Daniel Hale and Samuel Arnold, selectmen of Swansea ; Levi Cummings, ex-selectman ; Jeremiah Gray, William C. Davol, Jr., Rev. Payson W. Lyman, John S. Brayton, Jr., John P. Slade, Benjamin Buffinton, Henry S. Fenner, George Slade, David F. Slade, Esq. ; the venerable William Mason of Fall River, a native of Swansea ; Jonathan Slade, Hon. Wm. Lawton Slade, Hon. Daniel Wilbur, of Somerset ; Rev. George E. Allen, Hon. Weaver Osborn, Robert Adams, Job B. French, Wm. Lindsey, T. D. W. Wood and others of Fall River ; Rev. O. O. Wright of Newton, Conn., and others. Mr. Gardner arose and welcomed the people. He said :

*"Ladies and gentlemen :—*To me has been assigned the pleasant duty of presiding on this occasion. In view of what is to follow, however, I will not detain you with any extended remarks. I heartily welcome you here on this auspicious day, and trust that it will prove to all, one of memorable interest, pleasure and profit."

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Percy S. Grant of Fall River, after which Mr. Stevens, the donor of the building, was presented by Mr. Gardner, who said : "I now have the pleasure of presenting to you, the Honorable Frank Shaw Stevens, who is too well and favorably known in this community to need an introduction."

ADDRESS AND PRESENTATION

BY HON. FRANK SHAW STEVENS.

GREAT applause greeted Mr. Stevens as he rose to respond to the call of the chairman, and the high esteem in which he is held by his towns-people was manifested frequently during the progress of his brief but characteristic address. Mr. Stevens said :

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen :—

The occasion for which we have met here today is one of the greatest pleasure to me. Although not to the manor born, I have been a resident of the town and your neighbor for more than thirty years. I believe I can safely say there is no one who feels a greater interest or takes more pride in the prosperity of the town and its people than I do.

The first town meeting I ever attended here was held in the vestry of the Christian Church, and the town meetings were held there for a number of years after. When the Christian Society decided that politics and religion did not harmonize very well, it notified the town officials that they would have to procure other quarters, which they succeeded in getting at Swansea Factory ; and our meetings and elections have been held there since that time. I must say that they were very inadequate quarters, particularly so when politics ran high. When the warrant was issued calling the annual town meeting to be held in March 1890, there



Hon. Frank Shaw Stevens.

was a clause to see if the town would vote to build a town hall and make appropriations therefor. When I saw it, I made up my mind to propose at the town meeting to build a town hall and present it to the town : which proposition was unanimously accepted, and the building we are now in is the result.

I wish to put myself on record by saying that I had no selfish or personal motive in wishing the building located here, as I think anyone giving anything to a city or town ought to do it so as to benefit future generations as well as the present. For the past four or five years when in conversation with citizens and others interested in the town, I have casually asked them what part of the town they thought was going to increase in value and population the most in the next fifty years. I can safely say without an exception they said "Gardner's Neck." When asking them their reason, they said because of its location, it being bounded on the east by Lee's River, on the west by Cole's and on the south by Mount Hope Bay, and it also had railroad facilities which no other part of the town enjoyed. Taking the last ten years as a basis, I think they were right in their judgment.

With this object in view, some four or five years ago when making alterations in my will, I left some thousands of dollars to the town for the purpose of erecting a hall, and I left it without any restrictions of any kind, having confidence in the good judgment of the voters of the town that they would erect a building in the proper place.

I do not take any credit to myself for the tower, clock and bell, as that was the suggestion of a friend of the town, and mine as well. A few days after it became public, I received a communication something like this : it commenced, "My Venerable Friend :—I see by the papers that you are going to erect a hall and present it to your fellow citizens. I think that it is a very nice thing for you to do, and one

that will be appreciated. I have a suggestion to make which is, do not fail to have a tower and put in a clock and bell: for when the belated traveller is passing along and hears the bell striking the hour of the night he will say, 'God bless the donor of that clock and bell.' " He closed by saying "I can give this disinterested advice as I do not have to pay the bills."

The manner in which this thing was put pleased me very much, and the tower, bell and clock are the result.

Mr. Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, I now have the pleasure of presenting to you the deed of this property and the keys to the building, with the hope that the citizens of the town will have as much pleasure in receiving, as I have in making the gift.

As Mr. Stevens handed the important document and the keys to Mr. William P. Mason, the chairman of the selectmen, the applause of the audience was enthusiastic and long continued.

Mr. Mason, chairman of the selectmen, accepted the munificent gift in a brief address. He spoke as follows :

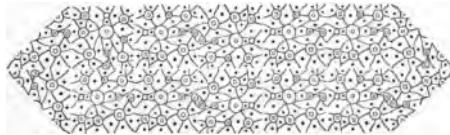
RESPONSE OF MR. MASON.

"Mr. Stevens:—In behalf of the citizens of Swansea, allow me to thank you for the generous and beautiful gift you bestow on us, and we know that within its walls we shall find among us men who can govern our town in such a manner as will be acceptable to all our citizens. I know the citizens of this town will all join with me in wishing a long life, combined with health and happiness, to Swansea's best friend and most liberal benefactor."

Hooper's Orchestra then rendered a selection, and contributed delightful music at intervals during the exercises.

The President then introduced the Hon. John Summerfield Brayton of Fall River, a native of Swansea Village, who would deliver the historical address of the day.

Mr. Brayton spoke in a clear voice, and held the undivided attention of the large audience for more than one hour, during the delivery of an address rich in historical information, choice in language, and eloquent in the presentation of facts that made every one present honor the name of Swansea.



O

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

BY HON. JOHN SUMMERFIELD BRAYTON.

SWANSEA to-day dedicates its first town hall. An honored and generous citizen has erected this sightly and commodious structure, adapted to the uses of the town and library, and has in your presence presented the same, with its appointments, as a free gift to the town. Thus, this ancient and historic municipality comes into possession of a town hall, worthy of its name and fame. Few rural towns in the Commonwealth have been so signally favored.

For nearly two centuries and a quarter, town meetings have been held here, but never yet in any town building other than the meeting house. From the first the town meeting was regarded as of high importance. In 1670 it was "ordered that whatsoever inhabitant of this town shall absent himself from any town meeting to which he shall be legally warned, he shall for every such absence, forfeit four shillings." Affairs of the greatest importance were there discussed and settled, and it was felt to be every citizen's duty to share in public decisions. What was a duty was also generally regarded as a privilege.

Originally these assemblies were held at the meeting house in what is now Barrington, afterwards at North Swansea, at private dwellings, in the meeting house at Luther's Corner, and recently in the hall at Swansea Factory. The dwelling house of Jonathan Hill and his son Caleb Hill, now the residence of Mrs. Kate F. Gardner in this village, was thus frequently used, as were also the houses of James Brown, James Luther and of Caleb Slade, the latter now the residence of Deacon Arnold. For four years just prior to the division of the town the house of Capt. Joseph Swazey at the north end of Somerset was thus utilized.

As long ago as 1812 a vote to build a town house was passed, but it was speedily reconsidered, and the proposition has never since been successfully carried through, although frequently discussed in town meetings. The contention has been happily settled by this day's events. We congratulate Swansea upon receiving this tangible proof of the loyalty and affection of her adopted son, and we congratulate him that by this act he has raised in the hearts of this people a monument more enduring than the pile he has reared. The wise man says, "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

We are here to revive the memories of the old town, to recall briefly some of the scenes, and some of the leading actors in its long and honorable history, and to sketch, though it can only be in outline, the course of events which have given it celebrity, and which merit more elaborate record than they have received, or than can now be given.

Its ancient territory included the home of that justly celebrated and honored Indian chief, Massasoit, who became the fast and inalienable friend of the English of Plymouth Colony, and whose home was at Sowams, within the territory now covered by the village of Warren. Its soil was probably first trodden by Englishmen when a visit was paid to

Massasoit in the summer following the Pilgrim's landing, by Edward Winslow, afterwards Governor of Plymouth Colony, and Stephen Hopkins. The object of the visit was to explore the country, ascertain the strength and power of the sachem, procure corn, and strengthen the mutual good understanding. They reached Massasoit's residence July 4th, having crossed the Titicut or Taunton river about three miles from Taunton Green, and passed through what is now the town of Swansea from east to west.

The next visit of the colonists was that of Capt. Miles Standish and fourteen of the English to the home of Corbitant, a petty sachem under Massasoit, who lived "at the head of the Neck," called by the Indians Metapoiset, now Gardner's Neck. Corbitant's residence could not have been far from this place. Some historians locate it in this village. Capt. Standish and his party came to take vengeance on Corbitant, in case a rumor that he had taken the life of Squanto, a friendly Indian, was true. They attacked his wigwam in the dead of night, badly wounding three of its inmates. As it was found that Squanto had not been slain, no harm was inflicted on Corbitant. The wounded were taken to Plymouth for treatment and afterwards returned with their wounds healed.

In March, 1623, Winslow accompanied by John Hampden paid his second visit to Massasoit, having been informed of his serious illness. They came down the east side of Taunton river to what is now Slade's Ferry ; where they were told that Massasoit was dead. Anxious, in that case, to conciliate Corbitant, Winslow decided to visit him at Metapoiset. Finding on their arrival that he had gone to visit Massasoit, and being assured that there was no certain news of the death of the chief, Winslow sent a messenger to Sowams who brought back word that he was still alive. Winslow then hastened to Sowams and found Massasoit apparently near

death, but by the judicious use of remedies he was able to save his life. This humane act determined the long and effective friendship of Massasoit for the colonists, and so proved of the greatest value. Winslow and Hampden departed from Sowams followed by the blessings of the sachem and all his people. At Corbitant's invitation they, on their way home, spent a night with him here, being treated with most generous hospitality.

During the twenty years next succeeding, the colonists added to Plymouth the six settled towns, Duxbury, Scituate, Taunton, Barnstable, Sandwich and Yarmouth. A trading post was located in Sowams as early as 1632, in which year Massasoit fled for shelter from the Narragansetts "to an English house at Sowams." But there was no settlement in this vicinity sufficient to warrant a town organization till 1645, when Rehoboth was incorporated. The same year John Brown bought Wannamoisett Neck of Massasoit. Three years later the church of Rehoboth suffered a "serious schism," the "first real schism" in religion which had taken place in the colony. Obadiah Holmes and eight others withdrew, set up "a meeting by themselves," and afterwards joined a Baptist church in Newport, whither some of them moved.

The same year a Baptist church was organized in Swansea, in Wales, under the pastorate of John Myles, who for the previous four years had preached with great success in various places. This was in the first year of Cromwell's protectorate. Under the religious freedom thus gained, the church at Swansea grew to a membership of three hundred. Mr. Myles became the leading Baptist minister in Wales. When the monarchy was restored the act of uniformity was passed, which drove two thousand of the best ministers in England from their places. Mr. Myles, with some members of his church, came to America in 1663. Finding that

in Rehoboth there were persons holding his faith, he went thither and formed a church of seven members.

Their "holy covenant" is a remarkable document, both in respect to the piety, and the spirit of Christian fellowship, which it evinces. They declare that union with Christ is the sole ground of their union, and of the Christian fellowship which they seek and will give.

Nevertheless, as soon as it became known that a Baptist church had been organized, the churches of the colony solicited the court to interpose its influence against it, and Pastor Myles and James Brown were fined each £5 and Nicholas Tanner 20s. for setting up a public meeting without the knowledge and approbation of the court, to the disturbance of the peace. They were further ordered to desist from their meeting for the space of a month, and advised to remove to some place where they would not prejudice any other church. This colonial disfavor towards those holding Baptist views is the fundamental fact in the origin of Swansea.

A plain house of worship was at once built, just over the southern border of Rehoboth, in New Meadow Neck, the members gradually settling near it. The catholic spirit of Mr. Myles drew thither not only Baptists, but others who were tolerant of their opinions.

Being without town government, these settlers thought to secure for themselves that measure of civil autonomy. Previous to Oct. 3d, 1667, Plymouth granted to Thomas Willett and his neighbors of Wannamoisett the privilege of becoming a town. On the above date they signified their desire for incorporation. To the new town was given the name borne by the place in Wales whence Pastor Myles had been driven, Swansea, ~~the Sea of Swans~~. It lay between the two upper forks of Narragansett Bay, south of the Rehoboth and Taunton lines, and extended from Taunton to Provi-

dence rivers. It consists of a series of five main peninsulas or necks projecting southward, and separated by arms of the bay and the streams flowing into them. The first neck on the east is Shewamet, now Somerset, lying between Taunton and Lee's rivers; the next is Metapoiset, now known as Gardner's Neck, between Lee's and Cole's rivers; the third is Kickemuit, between Cole's and Warren rivers. This tract is traversed by the Kickemuit river, which, where it broadens towards the bay, divides the tract into Toweset and Mont-haup (or Mount Hope) Necks. The fourth is New Meadow Neck, between Warren and Barrington rivers; and the fifth is Wannamoisett Neck, between Barrington and Providence rivers. The area of the old town has been three times reduced: first in 1717, by the separate incorporation of Barrington; second by the settlement of the line between Massachusetts and Rhode Island in 1747, whereby Little Compton, Tiverton, Barrington, Cumberland and the part of Swansea now known as Warren fell to Rhode Island; and third in 1790, when the tract known as Shewamet was made a separate town by the name of Somerset.

As we have seen, the motive to this settlement was religious. Ecclesiastical freedom was the goal which led the founders hither. The church was thus the basis of the town, and the town organization was in order that, in gaining ecclesiastical liberty, they need not sacrifice the high privilege of American citizenship. Some of those who were active in planting the church and town were not Baptists. They, however, saw that underneath the difference which separates Baptists from their fellow Christians, there was a fundamental adhesion to the essentials of the faith. Hence they were willing to co-operate with Baptists in extending the bounds both of the kingdom of God and of the Commonwealth. This diversity of opinion resulted in a town where a larger meas-

ure of religious liberty was enjoyed than anywhere else in the colony.

Historians agree in calling Pastor Myles and Capt. Thomas Willett the fathers of the town. To Capt. Willett, with four others, was given the trust of "the admittance of town inhabitants." The terms of membership which Willett proposed were laid before the church, and, after consideration by that body, a reply was made by Mr. Myles and John Butterworth. This document is a careful "explication" of the sense in which the proposals are to be understood and accepted, and reveals the scholarly and trained mind of the pastor. Like all other documents relating to the settlement, this clearly shows the religious motive to have been dominant. The "explications" made by the church were agreed to by the trustees, and the proposals, as thus explained, were adopted by the town February 20th, 1669.

On the foundation thus laid, Swansea was built. Until this time Baptists had been excluded from every colony in New England except Rhode Island. The organization of this town on the basis of religious toleration was thus an important epoch in the history of religious opinions and of ecclesiastical life. This church, which still lives and worships at North Swansea, was the first Baptist church formed in Massachusetts, and the fourth in the United States. Thus this town may justly claim to be the cradle of that branch of the Christian church in this Commonwealth.

At the close of King Philip's war, owing to the broken condition of his church, Mr. Myles labored three years in Boston. Finally the urgent entreaties of his people caused his return. As the settlement was mainly broken up, and a new one had been started further down the Neck, a parsonage and a church were there built. The death of Mr. Myles in 1683 closed a faithful and fruitful ministry of thirty-eight years.

EARLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

In the original partition of the public lands, there was reserved a pastor's, a teacher's and a schoolmaster's lot. This shows, that, at the outset, the people counted on the establishment of schools. December 19, 1673, it was ordered "that a school should be forthwith set up in this town for the teaching of grammar, rhetoric and arithmetic, and the tongues of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, also to read English and to write," and "that Mr. John Myles the present pastor of the church here assembling be schoolmaster," or "to have power to dispose the same to an able schoolmaster during the said pastor's life." The salary was to be "£40 in current country funds," but on condition that Mr. Myles and his successor should accept whatever the people would bestow in a weekly contribution for their ministerial services. Mr. Myles accepted the proposition and held his school in various parts of the town on successive months, to suit the convenience of pupils. Thus he deserves grateful remembrance not only as the first pastor but also as the early schoolmaster and teacher of youth who laid the foundation of the public schools of Swansea.

After his death no mention is made of a school till 1698, when Jonathan Bosworth was employed at £18, one-fourth in money and the rest in provisions at money prices. He was to teach the first month in Wannamoisset Neck, the second in New Meadow Neck, the third in Kickemuit, the fourth in the Cole neighborhood, and fifth on Metapoiset, and so in succession. Later, John Devotion was engaged at £12 and board and £20 for feeding a horse, to keep a school in succession "in the four quarters of the town." In 1709 he engaged for six years, and in 1715 for twenty years more. At this time it was voted that he should "teach our youth to read English and Lattin and wright & sifer as their may

be occasion." He was to teach five months each year, from October through February, the first two months near his own dwelling, and the other three in other parts of the town. His compensation was £17 10s. a year, three pounds of which was to be paid for the use of the schoolmaster's lot. Such were the beginnings of our public schools.

DIVISION OF INHABITANTS INTO RANKS,
AND DIVISION OF LAND.

To the trustees of the town was also assigned the duty of dividing the public lands. The method of division was as undemocratic as it was unprecedented. The men were divided into three ranks, according to the judgment of the trustees as to their standing. Promotions and degradations were made from time to time by a committee appointed by the town. The men of the first rank received three acres to two granted those of the second and to one granted those in the third. The majority were of the second rank, though more were of the third than of the first. For ten years this ranking system was in force. But it broke down when in 1681 the committee granted to five men, their heirs and assigns forever, "the full right and interest of the highest rank." It was all these freemen could stand to have a landed aristocracy. But to have it made hereditary they would not endure, and so the town by unanimous vote repudiated the act of the committee, and from that time the practice went into disuse.

CAPTAIN THOMAS WILLETT.

Of Capt. Thomas Willett much might be said. One of the last of the Leyden colony to come to Plymouth, he early secured and always enjoyed the confidence of the colonists. Their agent at the Maine trading posts, successor of Miles Standish in military command, largely engaged in

coastwise traffic, long an assistant in the Plymouth government, an arbitrator between his colony and Rhode Island on boundary disputes, chosen by Governor Stuyvesant of New Amsterdam as a man of fairness and integrity to represent the Dutch in their controversy with the English. "More acquainted with the manners and customs of the Dutch than any Englishman in the colony," and hence the leading adviser of the English in the negotiations which resulted in the surrender of New Amsterdam; prominent in organizing New York, its first mayor, and who "twice did sustaine the place," trusted beyond any other man by English, Dutch and Indians, a settler in Swansea as early as 1659 or '60, and until his death its foremost citizen, dying Aug. 4th, 1674, less than a year before Swansea was ravaged by Philip's Indians, buried with his wife near the head of Bullock's cove in East Providence; such in outline was the life of Capt. Thomas Willett.

KING PHILIP'S WAR.

The gradual alienation of their lands to the English, and the consequent growth of English settlements, threatened the ascendancy if not the existence of the Indian tribes. Against the latter contingency the colonists sought to guard. When the Plymouth authorities gave Capt. Willett liberty to purchase lands in Swansea, they added the express proviso, "so as he do not too much straiten the Indians." But by his land sales, Philip, son and successor of Massasoit, became shut into Mount Hope peninsula, so that his only land route out lay through Swansea.

We cannot now refer to the events which led to Philip's fierce and fatal outbreak, which, in its course, despoiled New England of a dozen towns, six hundred dwellings, and as many of its choicest young men. Swansea was destined to suffer the first baptism of blood and fire.

Convinced that war was impending, Maj. James Brown of Swansea, on the 14th of June, 1675, laid the facts of the case before Gov. Winslow, and two days later Capt. Benjamin Church brought to Plymouth conclusive evidence that war was at hand. Measures were at once taken to oppose force to force. On Sunday, June 20th, the predicted outburst occurred. Some of Philip's men raided Swansea, entering houses, helping themselves to food, shooting cattle and committing other acts of lawlessness. Most of the men were in church, but one was found at home, whose cattle were shot, and whose house was entered and liquor demanded. When it was refused, violence was resorted to, whereupon the householder shot one of the Indians, inflicting a serious, though not fatal wound.

A son of Major Brown at once bore tidings of the outbreak to Plymouth. A fast was proclaimed for Thursday, June 24th. The troops of all the towns were ordered to rendezvous at Taunton, Monday night, and messengers were sent to Boston to urge prompt assistance. A stone house, upon the farm of Gov. Brenton, at Metapoiset, occupied by Jared Bourne, was used as a garrison, which the Bridgewater company was ordered to re-enforce. This company reached the garrison Monday night and found there seventy persons, all but sixteen, woman and children. The next day, a part of the soldiers having escorted Mr. Brown to his home, on their return met thirty Indians, and a little later met some of the men of the garrison going to a barn for corn. Though warned of their danger, the men proceeded and were assailed, six of them being killed or mortally wounded.

Thus the first blood of the war was shed on Gardner's Neck. The Bridgewater troops remained at Bourne's garrison until re-enforced, when the inmates were conveyed down Mount Hope Bay to Rhode Island, and the house



The Garrison House of John Myles.

abandoned. This house stood on the farm long occupied by Mr. Saunders Sherman.

On the next day, June 23d, another man was shot within the bounds of Swansea, and his wife and child scalped. On Thursday, the appointed Fast Day, some of the Swansea settlers returning from church were attacked. One was killed, another was wounded, and two men going for a surgeon were slain. On the same day in another part of the town others were killed.

"By this time half of Swansea was burned." By Monday night, June 28th, two companies of foot and one of cavalry from Boston had joined the Plymouth forces already assembled at the garrison house of Pastor Myles, which is now standing near Myles's Bridge, at Barneyville. This bridge spans what is now known as Palmer's river, from Walter Palmer, an elderly settler of Rehoboth, its first representative at Plymouth, whose farm was on its banks. Across this bridge a detachment of cavalry pushed, but were fired upon and driven back with the loss of one killed and two wounded. Tuesday morning several Indians having appeared, were driven across the bridge and five or six of them slain. That night, Philip fearing that he should be caught in his own narrow peninsula, escaped to the Pocasset country, Tiverton, across the Mount Hope Bay. Major Savage, who had been placed in command of the Massachusetts troops, having arrived, the combined forces marched into Mount Hope Neck, in search of Philip. On their way, at Kickemuit, near the present village of Warren, they saw, set upon poles, the heads of the men who had been slain at Metapoiset. They continued their march down the Neck, but they found the wigwams untenanted and no Indians to be seen.

Thursday the Massachusetts troops returned to Myles's garrison, the cavalry going on to Rehoboth for better quar-

ters. Returning the next morning they came upon some Indians burning a building, and killed four or five of them. On Sunday, July 4th, Capt. Hutchinson brought orders for the Massachusetts troops to go to Narraganset country, and seek an agreement which should hold that tribe back from the support of Philip.

The next two weeks saw the expedition of Capt. Fuller and Church to the Pocasset and Seacounet country, which revealed the bitterly hostile temper of these tribes; the two expeditions which Church led to the Pocasset Swamp, in one of which Philip lost fifteen men, the march of the major part of the Plymouth force by way of Taunton toward the swamp, the apparently successful negotiation of the Narragansetts, their return to Swansea and their junction with the Plymouth troops, at Pocasset Swamp, within which Philip had taken refuge. Philip eluded his besiegers on the night of the last day of July, crossing Taunton river, probably near Dighton Rock. Though assailed while crossing Seekonk plain by the men of Rehoboth who slew some thirty of his men, he escaped into the Nipmunk country. Thus he was launched upon a life and death struggle with the colonists.

With unabated fury the contest raged through the remainder of 1675 and the first half of 1676. But the sanguinary and ferocious conquest of the Narragansetts, the desertion of many of his confederates and the death of many more, left Philip in an almost hopeless plight; and after a year's absence he seems to have been resolved to meet his fate in the beautiful land which held the graves of his fathers, and which had been his home. Abandoned by his confederates, betrayed by his friends, his most faithful followers fallen in battle, his wife and son in the hands of his deadly foes, hunted from wood to wood, from swamp to swamp, he had come to his ancestral seat to make his last

stand. Yet such was his temper that he would not hear of peace. He even struck dead one of his own followers for suggesting it. A kinsman of the man thus slain brought news of Philip's hiding place to Capt. Church, who with his soldiers was on Rhode Island. They at once crossed to Mount Hope. The informer acting as guide, they made their way up the west side of the Neck, toward the swamp within which Philip had taken refuge. Creeping stealthily up, in the dark of the early morning, the force completely invested the knoll on which Philip was encamped. When the alarm was given, he plunged into the swamp, only to meet two of his besiegers. By one of them, the Indian Alderman, he was shot. Thus the renowned chieftain, who had been the terror of New England, fell, pierced through the lungs and heart. And thus ended the mortal career of the most noted Indian in American history.

In the times immediately succeeding his uprising and overthrow, no epithet was too bitter for the use of those against whom he rose.

But history has, in a measure, reversed their judgment. Though all must rejoice in the failure of his attempt, yet we can sympathize with the motives which actuated him. In the classic words of Irving: "He was a patriot attached to his native soil,—a prince, true to his subjects and indignant of their wrongs,—a soldier, daring in battle, firm in adversity, patient of fatigue, of hunger, of every variety of bodily suffering, and ready to perish in the cause he had espoused." "With heroic qualities and bold achievements that would have graced a civilized warrior, and have rendered him the theme of the poet and the historian, he lived a wanderer and a fugitive in his native land, and went down, like a lonely bark, foundering amid darkness and tempest—without a pitying eye to weep his fall, or a friendly hand to record his struggle."

NOTABLE MEN OF SWANSEA'S FIRST CENTURY.

Among the best known of Swansea's early settlers was Maj. James Brown, brother of Capt. Willett's wife. He was one of the original members of the Swansea Church, one of the five citizens who were to admit to the town, and divide its lands, long a leading citizen and officer, representative in the Plymouth Court in 1671-2, a local leader in the campaign against Philip, and successor of Capt. Willett, as an "assistant in Plymouth Colony."

Another name not to be forgotten is that of Lieut. Hugh Cole, an original member of the church, an early selectman, representing the town seven of its first fifteen terms in the General Court. Like the immortal Washington, Lieut. Cole was a land surveyor.

In 1669 he bought of Philip five hundred acres of land on Toweset Neck, on the west side of the river to which his name was given.

When the Indian War broke out, two of his sons were captured and taken to Philip's headquarters. Philip released them with the advice that their father should seek safety on Rhode Island. He at once took his family thither, probably down the Bay, but he had hardly gone when his house was fired. After the war he settled on the west side of the Neck upon Kickemuit River. His farm, and the well which he dug the year after Philip's death, are still in possession of his descendants.

With Willett and Brown as the town's first trustees was associated Nathaniel Paine, who afterwards settled on the Mt. Hope lands, and became one of the founders of Bristol, and the third Judge of Probate for Bristol County. The first Judge of Probate was John Saffin, an early proprietor of Swansea, admitted to the first rank among its inhabitants in 1680, a son-in-law of Capt. Willett, a member of the Gener-

al Court for Boston from 1684 and Speaker from 1686 till the usurpation of Andros, settling in Bristol about 1688, Probate Judge from 1692 to 1702, and also Judge of the Superior Court one year.

An Associate Justice of the first court established in Bristol County was John Brown of Swansea, a grandson of the first John Brown.

One of the early large proprietors of Swansea land was Governor William Brenton of Newport, who bought Metapoiset Neck of the Indians in 1664. Here he lived for a time after King Philip's War. He had been Governor of Rhode Island Colony from 1666 to 1669, having been previously Deputy Governor four years. He became a very extensive land owner. His Metapoiset land was cultivated by Jared Bourne, whose house was garrisoned during the war. He bequeathed it to his son Ebenezer, who in 1693 sold it to Lieut. Samuel Gardner and Ralph Chapman for £1700. Mr. Gardner took the south part and Mr. Chapman the north. Mr. Gardner had been a prominent citizen of Freetown, representing it in the General Court, and holding the offices of town clerk, treasurer and selectman. To the latter office he was at once chosen in Swansea, but did not long survive his removal hither.

In 1779, Col. Simeon Potter, a native of Bristol, one of Rhode Island's prominent men, settled on Gardner's Neck. His homestead farm extended from Lee's to Cole's rivers. He was the owner of other large tracts of land. For more than a quarter of a century he was one of the prominent figures of this community, a hospitable and generous householder, surrounded by whatever wealth could command, owning also a number of slaves. Col. Potter was representative in 1784, to the General Court from Swansea. In 1795 he gave a valuable parcel of land in Newport to support in that city a free school forever for the advantage of poor

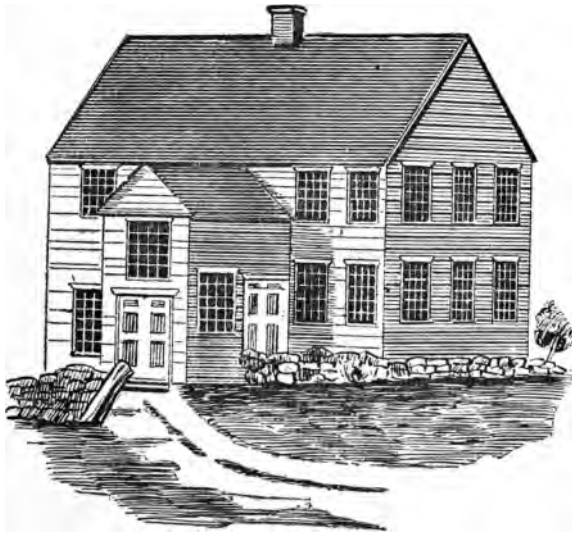
children of every denomination. A large school house erected in 1880 is called the Potter school. He bequeathed a small farm to one of his former slaves, in the possession of whose heirs it still remains. His homestead farm and the house in which he lived are now owned by Mrs. Macomber.*

SUCCESSIVE PASTORATES OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

The immediate successor of Mr. Myles in the Swansea pastorate was Captain Samuel Luther, a founder and early proprietor of the town, in whose affairs he wielded great influence, sustaining nearly every civil and military office in the gift of his townsmen. He was ordained two years after the death of Mr. Myles, and held the pastorate thirty-two years. The old meeting house at North Swansea, which was familiar to many of you, was built the year after his death, in 1717, and stood until 1845, when it was taken down and the present house of worship erected. Ephraim Wheaton who had been his colleague, became his successor. He was a man of respectable property, of influence and of power, and successful in the ministry, adding to the church by baptism about one hundred persons in seventeen years.

Next come Samuel Maxwell and Jabez Wood, followed by Charles Thompson, probably the most distinguished man in the long line of Mr. Myles's successors. He was valedictorian of the first class graduated at Brown University, a chaplain in the American Army, and pastor in Warren. When his church and parsonage in that place were burned by the British soldiers in 1778, he was taken prisoner and confined a month in Newport. His people sought and were welcomed to temporary membership in the Swansea church, of which he shortly became pastor. During his twenty-two year's pastorate one hundred and seventy-six were baptized into the fellowship of the church. He was a scholarly man,

* See Appendix No. 2.



The old meeting house at North Swansea, erected in 1717 and taken down in 1845, it being the house of worship of the first Baptist church organized in Massachusetts.

a schoolmaster for many years, a man of great pulpit power, of commanding voice, fine figure, expressive features, tender sympathies, plain and forcible in speech, exalting the great truths of the evangelical system, and using them effectively as the weapons of his spiritual warfare, often a preacher on public occasions, and considered a leader in the denomination whose ministry he adorned.

Under some of the leaders who followed, the church for a while lost the fellowship of the adjacent churches of its order, but recovered it under the ministry of Rev. Abiel Fisher who served it faithfully from 1836 to 1846. More brief pastorates have brought the church down to the present time, and it still stands for the faith once delivered to the saints, in its two hundred and twenty-eighth year. Long may it continue a light to lead the community in ways of truth and righteousness.

“THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN SWANSEA.”

The distance of the church after its removal to the lower end of New Meadow Neck, caused the residents of the central portion of Swansea to establish religious services near Luther's Corner, as early as 1680, four years after the death of Philip. Organization was effected and a pastor ordained in 1693. If this be counted a Baptist Church it was the thirteenth in America. Its record book styles it a “Church of Christ in Swansea.” No doctrinal tests, but only evidence of Christian character, were required for admission. Thomas Barnes, one of the original proprietors of the town, was chosen and ordained pastor at the time of organization, his death closing a successful ministry of thirteen years. His successor, Joseph Mason, was a son of Samson Mason, who was a soldier of Oliver Cromwell, and who on coming to America settled in Rehoboth. Another of his sons was the first deacon of the church. John Pierce became colleague

of Joseph Mason in 1715. These two men "continued in good esteem in their offices until the death of Elder Mason in 1748 and of Elder Pierce in 1750, being each of them near ninety years old."

Ten years before the death of Elder Mason, upon the request of the two pastors for a colleague, his nephew, Job Mason, was appointed. He proved a judicious pastor and an able preacher, so that, in later years, the era of his pastorate was regarded as the golden age of the church. His brother Russell became his associate in 1752 and his successor in 1775, ministering to this people forty-seven years and dying just before the dawn of this century. A cousin of these two, Benjamin Mason, became the colleague and the successor of Elder Russell, his labors continuing to his death in 1813.

Thus, for one hundred and seven consecutive years, the pastoral office in this church was filled by a son or a grandson of Samson Mason. With the latest of the line, Philip Slade, Jr., was associated in 1801, whom he succeeded in 1813, being dismissed in 1820. He was succeeded by Benjamin Taylor, who spent ten useful and successful years in the ministry here, being held in honor throughout the region. Want of time forbids even the merest mention of his successors. Two years hence this church will pass the two hundredth anniversary of its organization. It is, perhaps, the oldest church in the Commonwealth which has never had any legal connection with a town.

Some of the older members of the Second Church, not satisfied with the dismissal of Elder Philip Slade, left the church and held services under his conduct at the house of Deacon Ellery Wood, about a mile north of Luther's Corner. They were organized as a church by the Six Principle Baptists. Deacon Wood bequeathed his homestead for the maintenance of worship and it became the home of Elder

Comstock, (the only pastor after Elder Slade,) and the house of worship as well. The proceeds of the property which has been sold, are now held in trust for the benefit of the denomination.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

Her contributions for the support of the war for national independence constitute an important and honorable chapter in the history of Swansea.

At a meeting held Sept. 26th, 1774, the town chose Col. Andrew Cole, Capt. Levi Wheaton, Capt. Philip Slade, Richard Cornell and Capt. Luther Thurber a committee to meet with the delegates from the other towns of the county, in Taunton "then and there to deliberate and devise measures sutabel to the exigency of the times."

A Hampshire county convention had just been held "to consult upon measures to be taken in this time of general distress in the province, occasioned by the late attack of the British Ministry upon the constitution of said province." That attack had come in the shape of an act of Parliament "For the Better Regulating of the Province of Massachusetts Bay." The principle of this act, Bancroft says, "was the concentration of all executive power, including the courts of justice, in the hands of the royal governor. Without a previous notice to Massachusetts, and without a hearing, it took away rights and liberties which the people had enjoyed from the foundation of the colony" with scarcely an exception. It superseded a charter, "which had been the organic law of the people of Massachusetts for more than eighty years." It provided that the Governor's Council should be appointed by the King, rather than chosen by the representatives of the people. The Governor appointed by the Crown, without even consulting his council, might appoint and remove all judges and court officers. The selection of jurors was taken from the freeholders and given to the sheriffs, who

were appointees of the Governor. Worse than all, the regulating act sought to throttle the town meeting, that dearest of all institutions to New England, whose people, as Bancroft so well puts it, "had been accustomed, in their town meetings, to transact all business that touched them most nearly, as fathers, as freemen, and as Christians. There they adopted local taxes to keep their free schools; there they regulated the municipal concerns of the year: there they chose their representatives and instructed them: and there most of them took measures for the settlement of ministers of the gospel in their congregations: there they were accustomed to express their sentiments upon any subject connected with their interests, rights, liberties, and religion."

The new act allowed only two town meetings annually, in which town officers and representatives might be chosen, but no other matters introduced. Every other assembly of a town was forbidden, except only upon written leave of the Governor, and then only for business expressed in that leave. Thus the King trampled under foot the customs, laws, and privileges of the people of Massachusetts.

This act went immediately into effect, and at once forced a choice between resistance and submission.

In this juncture, the Committee of Boston sent a circular letter to all the towns in the province, in which they said: "Though surrounded by a large body of armed men, who, having the sword, have also our blood in their hands, we are yet undaunted. To you, our brethren, and dear companions in the cause of God, we apply. To you we look for that advice and example which with the blessing of God shall save us from destruction." This urgent message roused the State: William Prescott of Pepperell, who in less than a year was to stand at the head of a band of American soldiers to dispute with the British regulars the possession of the Bunker Hill redoubt, expressed the mind of

the State, when he wrote for his neighbors, "We think, if we submit to these regulations, all is gone. Let us all be of one heart and stand fast in the liberties wherewith Christ has made us free." Everywhere the people were weighing the issue in which they were involved, and one spirit animated the country.

This was the situation in view of which Swansea sent Col. Andrew Cole and his associates "to deliberate and devise measures sutabel to the exigency of the times." And this was why in a town meeting which the new regulating act interdicted but which was nevertheless held, Swansea chose Colonel Andrew Cole, Col. Jerathmiel Bowers and Capt. Levi Wheaton as "a committee for said town to meet with other committees of the several towns in the province, at Concord to act on measures agreeable to the times." This was why later, they chose a Committee of Inspection to execute the wishes of the Continental Congress.

Thus by their votes in town meeting, New England everywhere bade defiance to Great Britain. In this town twelve of these meetings were held in one year.

Committees of Inspection, Correspondence and Safety were appointed by all the towns, composed of their leading men. Through them the authorities reached the people at large, and secured the execution of their plans.

The events of the fateful morning of April 19, 1775, are known to all. The six companies of Rehoboth are all on record as responding to the Lexington alarm. It is not likely that the three Swansea companies, which with those of Rehoboth constituted the first Bristol regiment, failed to respond to the call, though no record of such response has come to my knowledge. The town, two days later, ordered the Selectmen to provide 40 "gons" 250 lbs. of powder, 700 lbs. of lead and 600 flints, and directed "that fifty men be enlisted to be ready at a minute's warning." May 22nd a

Committee of Inspection was appointed, and it was voted "that the town will secure and defend said committee and empower them to follow and observe such directions as they shall receive from time to time from the Provincial Congress or Committee of Safety." At this time five shillings penalty was imposed for wasting a charge of powder, and the offender's stock of ammunition was forfeited.

In order to ascertain Swansea's response to the call for troops the muster rolls of the Revolution have been examined and a book has been placed in the library into which such parts of them as relate to Swansea have been transcribed. An indexed alphabetical list has been prepared which shows that not less than four hundred and sixteen Swansea men bore arms in the War for Independence, many of them however, only for brief periods along our own shores. On this list the surnames which occur oftenest are Peck, Martin, Anthony and Bowers, which each have seven representatives, Kingsley nine, Wood and Pierce each eleven, Cole and Barney each twelve. Mason eighteen, Chase nineteen, while Luther leads all the rest with a record of twenty-seven.

From such rolls as are extant the following facts are gathered: Seven Swansea men served at least five months of 1775 in Col. David Brewer's regiment near Boston, as did a few in other regiments doing duty there. Probably many more did actually serve that year. The alarms of war were brought close home to this section. From the time when the British took possession of the island called Rhode Island in December, 1776, till they abandoned it two years later, the militia were often called into service. Troops were repeatedly called to Slade's Ferry, Howland's Ferry, (now the Stone Bridge in Tiverton) to Bristol, to Warwick Neck, (a part of which is now known as Rocky Point) and even to the Island itself.

In May 1779, it was "voted that there be a guard on

each of the necks for safety of the good people of the town." Later in 1779 "voted 22 men to guard the shores." Eight Swansea men served in the artillery company of Capt. Fales of Taunton, at Slade's Ferry in December, 1776.

Of three militia captains of this town Peleg Sherman, afterwards Colonel, was a leading factor in the conduct of Swansea's relation to the great struggle. He was often moderator of town meetings and at the head of important committees on military affairs. He was in active service along our shore during the British occupation of Rhode Island, *e. g.* at Slade's Ferry from January 6 to June 5, 1777, and at Bristol later in the same year. He also served the government as commissary for the supply of stores to the troops. His home, where at one time troops were quartered, was at Shewamet Neck, at what is now known as the Henry H. Mason place, where he died Nov. 20, 1811, aged sixty-four.

Philip Slade, another of the militia captains, was also often on important committees. He was selected to wait upon General Sullivan, "to represent to him the fenceless condition of the town, and pray him to be pleased to order a guard for us against our enemies on Rhode Island." He was on July 5th, 1779, appointed one of the committee "to confer with General Gates at Providence upon some measures for the safety of the town," and at the same meeting he and John Mason "were chosen delegates to represent the town at Cambridge in forming a new constitution."

The same thing can be said in perhaps less degree of the third Captain Peleg Peck, whose company served frequently along our shores, as for instance, at Bristol, in December 1776, on a secret expedition to Tiverton, where it was stationed from Sept. 29th, to Oct. 30th, 1777, at Warwick, R. I., from January to April 1778, and later in the same year, on Rhode Island about six weeks.

A pay roll for the Continental pay of Capt. Peck's company who were called out by an alarm to Tiverton, states that "by order of Col. Peleg Slead all the men in Swansea were joined in one company under Capt. Peck," to respond to an alarm at Tiverton. The roll bears one hundred and seventy-eight names, and shows that the men served from four to nine days. In the expedition of Gen. Sullivan on Rhode Island, Col. Carpenter's regiment of Rehoboth and Swansea men distinguished themselves for their bravery, Benjamin Smith of Swansea being wounded by a bursting shell.

Another of the local leaders in this struggle was Col. Peleg Slead, one of the largest land owners of the town, who was called to fill many important offices of town and State, and who proved himself an ardent friend of his country's cause. He died Dec. 28, 1813, at the age of eighty-four, and is buried in the cemetery on his homestead farm, not far from this village.

On a muster roll dated Sept. 16th, 1777, eight Swansea men are returned as enlisted for the present war in Col. Henry Jackson's regiment, which was probably in service on the Hudson. On the 19th of June, 1778, ten men were drafted for nine months from their arrival at Fishkill, and about the same time three for nine months from their arrival at Springfield.

April 10th, 1778, the General Court having ordered 2,000 men to be raised to recruit the State's fifteen battalions of Continental troops for service either in Rhode Island or on the Hudson, twenty-six Swansea men were sent to Col. William Lee's regiment. In 1779, twelve Swansea men were in Continental regiments on duty in Rhode Island. During this year one-seventh part of the male population was ordered under arms in the national service. Swansea was behind on its quota only three men, few towns showing

a better record. 1780 and 1781 saw other men in small numbers enlisted for three years or the war.

Thus, with constant drafts for men and money, the war wore on to its triumphant close in 1783, when the people had the joy of knowing that the last British soldier had left our shores, and that through great sacrifice in blood and treasure Independence was secured.

SHIP BUILDING.

One of the earlier industries of the colonies was that of ship building.

For several years the immigration of shipwrights was encouraged, and special privileges were given them, such as exemption from the duty of training, and from the taxation of property actually used by them in their business. These inducements brought hither a number of good carpenters. In 1694 a sloop of forty tons burden was built in Swansea, and in 1697 a ship of seventy-eight tons. In the early part of the last century, Samuel Lee came to this country in the interest of English people, to look after timber land. He settled on Shewamet Neck and built a house near the residence of Mr. Levi Slade, establishing a shipyard at the landing, where for several years he carried on a large industry. In 1707 a ship of 120 tons,—a large craft for those times—was launched. In 1708 a brigantine of fifty tons and a ship of one hundred and seventy tons, in 1709 two brigantines of fifty-five tons each, and in 1712 a sloop of eighty tons were built in Swansea. The river upon which Mr. Lee located his yard soon after his advent took and has since retained his name, Lee's River.

Vessels have been built near the residence of Mr. William H. Pearce, on Cole's river.

Prior to 1801, when he moved to New York, Jonathan Barney built several small vessels on Palmer's river. In

1802 his son, Mason Barney, being then less than twenty years of age, contracted to build a ship. Although young Barney was acquainted with the nature of ship building, through his father carrying it on, he himself did not know the use of tools. His courage and self reliance in taking such a contract, when so young and inexperienced, foreshadowed the character of the future man. By his zeal, enthusiasm and determined will he overcame the great difficulties which to most men would have been insurmountable. From this beginning sprung up the ship building business at Barneyville, and Mr. Barney's subsequent great prominence in business circles. He sometimes employed two hundred and fifty men, annually disbursing large sums of money. The sails of the good substantial vessels, which in the course of a half a century he built, whitened almost every sea.

During his business career he built one hundred and forty-nine vessels, from the small fishing smack to the ship of 1,060 tons, the largest vessel that had then been launched in this section of New England.

It has been publicly stated, without denial, that Mr. Barney built more vessels than any other man in this country had then built.

The financial crisis of 1857 found him with two large ships upon his hands, with no market. In them he had invested a large part of his fortune, which was thus entirely dissipated, and he was compelled to give up business. With him passed away the ship building interest of Swansea.

Mr. Barney died on the first day of April, 1869. The house in which he was born in 1782 is still standing, and dates from old colonial times.

He was a fine specimen of an earnest, enthusiastic and persevering man. He was unaffected, original in his character, simple in his tastes and habits, always genial and hospitable. In his death the community lost an enterprising, honest and eminent citizen.

OTHER MANUFACTURES.

Richard Chase began the manufacture of shoes here in 1796, and pursued the business for nearly fifty years, employing more people than any other man in town except Mr. Barney.

Other industries have been pursued in a small way, such as the making of paper and the manufacture of cotton, which last industry was commenced at Swansea Factory in the year 1806 by Oliver Chace, and it was also carried on at a small mill at what is now Swansea Dye Works; cotton was carded and spun, and the yarn sent out to be woven into cloth by farmers' wives and daughters, as was the case in all cotton manufactories in those days.

All these early industries, with others of which I cannot now speak, have passed away.

POST-OFFICES.

The first post-office in Swansea was established on the first day of July, 1800. Mr. Reuben Chace was appointed post-master. He opened an office at his dwelling-house, for many years known as "The Buttonwood," some three quarters of a mile west of Swansea village.

On the 17th day of June, 1814, Mr. John Mason was appointed post-master, and he removed the office to the village, where it has since been located. Mr. Mason continued in office until the 12th day of June, 1849, when Mr. John A. Wood was appointed post-master, who retained the office until the sixth day of June, 1853, when Mr. John Mason was again appointed, and who remained in office until the 23d day of March, 1864, when Mr. John A. Wood was reinstated as post-master. Mr. Wood held the office until the 18th day of June, 1867, when his son, Mr. Henry O. Wood, was appointed his successor. Mr. Henry O. Wood served as post-master for twenty years, having resigned on

the 24th day of May, 1887, when Mr. Lewis S. Gray, the present post-master was appointed.

A post-office designated "Barneyville" was established at North Swansea, and Mr. Mason Barney appointed the first post-master on the 20th day of February, 1830. The name of this office was subsequently changed to North Swansea. Mr. Barney was superseded as post-master by Mr. Alvan Cole on the 28th day of June, 1836. Mr. Cole retained the office until the 28th day of February, 1838, when Capt. James Cornell was appointed post-master, and remained in office until the 24th day of June, 1841, when Mr. Mason Barney was reappointed as post-master. Mr. Barney, Sr., was followed in office by his son, Mr. Mason Barney, Jr., on the 15th day of April, 1867, who continued post-master until he was succeeded on the 12th day of February, 1872, by the present post-master, Mr. William P. Mason.

The post-office at Swansea Center was established on the 29th day of December, 1888, when Mr. Seth W. Eddy was appointed post-master, and now holds that office.

The post-office at Hortonville was established and Mr. L. L. Cummings, the present post-master, was appointed to that office on the 19th day of January, 1885.

On the 24th day of October 1890, a post-office, "South Swansea," was established on Gardner's Neck at the station of the Old Colony Railroad Company. Mr. Frank J. Arnold was appointed post-master, and began the business of the office on the 20th day of November, 1890. He is the present post-master.

THE POPULATION OF SWANSEA.

The population of Swansea from the time of the first State census in 1765 has never varied greatly. The total at that time was 1,840 which has never been exceeded save in 1820, when it reached 1,933. The lowest point was touched

in 1870, when it fell to 1,294. Since that date it has been slowly but steadily rising. In 1890 the number was 1,456.

The stationary character of Swansea's population is due largely to the fact that its chief industry is agricultural. At the last census, though it ranked as low as the two hundred and eleventh town in the State in population, it stood thirty-sixth in value of agricultural products.

The fixed tenure of many of its farms is worthy of note. Some of them are still owned and occupied by the lineal descendants of the first proprietors, having descended from father and son to the sixth and seventh generation. The Masons, the Browns, the Woods, the Gardners and other families are now living on their ancestral acres.

Though the industry of Swansea has been largely agricultural, its citizens have had no unimportant agency in the development of the cotton manufacture in Fall River. When that industry was there begun, a very considerable portion of the money invested came from the country towns.

The Fall River Manufactory, the first cotton mill erected there, was built in 1813. Its capital was divided into sixty shares, of which William Mason and Samuel Gardner, 2d, of Swansea, took two each. Mr. Mason soon added to his holdings, so that one twelfth part of the stock was held in this town, and at a subsequent date a still larger percentage.

The Troy Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company was organized a little later, the originator of which was Oliver Chace, who had had some experience in a small way in the manufacture of cotton at Swansea Factory, and who moved to Fall River where he could embark on a more extensive scale. He took one tenth part of the stock in the new company, while an equal amount was taken here by Benjamin Slade, Moses Buffinton, Oliver Earle, Joseph G. Luther and Joseph Buffinton, making one fifth of its entire capital.

Thus Swansea men and Swansea money essentially aided in the early development of cotton manufacture.

Many of Swansea's young men have become the skilled mechanics, artisans and contractors who have been important factors in the growth and development of the cities of Taunton, Providence, New Bedford and Fall River. Some of the prominent business men of these cities originated here. Fall River's first mayor, the Hon. James Buffinton, who so long and ably represented this district in Congress, spent years of his boyhood in this village. Another mayor of that city, the Hon. Samuel M. Brown, was born and reared in Swansea; also the Hon. Caleb Earle, who was Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island from 1821 to 1824, and Col. John Albert Munroe, recently deceased, who filled a marked place in the military and professional history of Rhode Island.

REPRESENTATION IN THE GENERAL COURT.

The first representation of Swansea in the General Court was in 1670, when John Allen was sent to represent it at Plymouth.

Of the long line of men who, in the last two hundred and twenty years, have represented the town in the General Court, Col. Jerathmiel Bowers had the longest term of service, in all nineteen years. Next to him in length of service comes Daniel Haile, with fourteen terms; Ephraim Pierce, with twelve; Christopher Mason, with eight; Hugh Cole, with seven; Ezekiel Brown, with six, and Joseph Mason, Jr., with five.

Several of its citizens have been honored with a seat in the State Senate.

Hon. John Mason, a life-long resident of Swansea village, was colleague in the Constitutional Convention of 1820 with Daniel Haile, who had then had a dozen terms in the House. That year Mr. Haile was defeated by Dr. John

Winslow, who was a Federalist in politics. In 1821, John Mason was brought forward by the Democrats as the only man who could defeat Dr. Winslow. The two men were next door neighbors, and with their families were on most intimate terms. Mr. Mason won by six votes. In the following year he was elected to the House, in which he served two terms, after which he was four in the Senate and four in the council of Gov. Levi Lincoln. Later he was four years a county commissioner, and was town clerk fifty of the years between 1808 and 1865, and postmaster forty-six of the years between 1814 and 1864.

At the November election in 1850, three senators were elected for Bristol County, one of them being Hon. Geo. Austin of Swansea. Soon after the General Court convened in 1851, Mr. Taber of New Bedford, resigned his seat and the two branches of the Legislature, as then required by the constitution, met in convention to choose a person to fill the vacancy from the two defeated candidates who received the highest number of votes at the autumnal election. The choice fell upon Hon. John Earle of this town, and thus Swansea had two senators, Messrs. Austin and Earle, for the remainder of the session, an unprecedented honor. Mr. Austin was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1852.

The Hon. Frank Shaw Stevens, whose name appears upon the tablet on the outer walls of this building, was senator from this district in 1884. He modestly declined a reelection, which would have been triumphantly accorded him.

PHYSICIANS.

As the Masons have been prominent among those who have ministered to the souls of Swansea people, so the Winslows were ministers to their bodily health for three quarters of a century, from 1765, when Dr. Ebenezer Winslow lo-

cated here. He became one of the most widely known physicians in Southern Massachusetts. He died in 1830, in his ninetieth year. His son, Dr. John Winslow, rivalled even his eminent father in the successful practice of medicine, to which he devoted his entire life, dying in 1838. Though their patients were widely scattered, yet these physicians never drove in a wheeled vehicle, always travelling on horseback, carrying their medicines in saddle-bags, the custom of those days. Dr. John W. Winslow, son of Dr. John Winslow, early became well and favorably known as "young Dr. Winslow," and gave promise of eminence in his profession. But he died at the early age of thirty-two in 1836. For several years these three generations of physicians were here together in the practice of their profession. Dr. A. T. Brown began here, in 1836, a successful practice of sixteen years duration.

For nearly half a century Dr. James Lloyd Wellington, a Harvard classmate of Gen. Charles Devens, James Russell Lowell, the sculptor William W. Story, William J. Rotch and George B. Loring, has been the highly esteemed physician of this place. By his self-sacrificing devotion to the noble but exacting profession he adorns, he has won, what is far better than wealth, the gratitude of the whole community which he has served so skilfully and successfully. Long may he continue to be to this people, what he has already been to two generations, the trusted friend, the wise counselor, and the good physician.

LAWYERS.

Several lawyers, previous to the year 1832, lived and practiced their professions here, among whom were the Hon. Pliny Merrick, for eleven years an Associate Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth; Hezekiah Battelle and Eliab Williams, who moved to Fall

River and formed there the law co-partnership of Battelle & Williams, so long and favorably known in this section of the State.

Among the present leaders of the Bristol Bar, Swansea, by one of her sons, is represented in each of the three cities of this county: Hon. Edwin L. Barney of New Bedford, Hon. James Brown of Taunton, and Jonathan M. Wood, Esq., of Fall River.

UNION MEETING HOUSE.

This structure in which we are now assembled occupies the site of a Union meeting house which was built by the joint efforts of people of several denominations resident here. In the dedication which occurred Dec. 29th, 1830, Methodists, Baptists, Swedenborgians and Universalists participated. The hymns sung were composed by Elder Baker, a Six Principle Baptist clergyman. Services were maintained some years, but as the building was not owned by any one denomination, timely and needed repairs were not made, for want of which it became unfit for use and was finally demolished. The site was for a number of years disused. Since it seemed impracticable for a private title to be acquired, it was finally condemned and taken into possession by the town, upon the generous offer of Mr. Stevens to erect for the town's use a public building suited to the needs of the place.

Thus, in the order of occupancy, upon this spot there has been reproduced a picture of early New England. The primary organization was the church, as we have seen in the history of Swansea; after the church the town; so here, we have had first the house of religious worship, and now the hall for municipal use and the library.

UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY.

Some of the prominent men of this and adjoining towns, who had maintained occasional religious services, were organized in 1838 as the First Universalist Society of Swansea.

The Rev. Aaron L. Balch, who was a preacher to this people before the organization of the society, died in this village Nov. 4, 1837, and was buried in the cemetery. The society has not maintained regular services for many years, and the members have to some extent become connected with other religious bodies.

CHRIST CHURCH, SWANSEA.

In May, 1845, Rev. A. D. McCoy, rector of the Church of the Ascension in Fall River, opened a Sunday evening service here which he maintained till November, 1847. A church was organized January 7, 1846. A Sunday school was established and superintended by Dr. Geo. W. Chevers, a physician of Fall River, afterward a clergyman, who during the greater part of 1847 conducted lay readings on Sunday, morning and afternoon.

The services were at first held in the Union meeting house. A neat and attractive church edifice was shortly erected and dedicated December 2, 1847. The first resident rector was Rev. John B. Richmond, who served the church four years from January 1st, 1848. The duration of most of the subsequent pastorates has been brief, though that of Rev. N. Watson Munroe lasted eleven years.

The only survivor of those who were active in the organization is the Rev. Benjamin H. Chace, who when about 40 years of age gave up his secular occupation, and prepared himself for the office of the Christian ministry, being ordained in 1854. In the serene evening of a long and useful

ministerial life he has returned to this his native village to await the call of the Master to come up higher. With the work of the church which he and his wife did so much to establish, he is in active sympathy.

THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

The war to preserve the Union, on account of its nearness to our time, interests us more deeply than does the war which made us an independent nation. But in some respects it called for less endurance and sacrifice. The clash of arms and the alarms of war did not vex these hillsides and echo across these bays as they had done in Philip's and the Revolutionary wars. It was not so long continued nor financially so disastrous as was the war for independence, in which the financial system of the country went to wreck, and its promises to pay became worthless, insomuch that, even three years before the war ended, this town voted \$140 for an axe, and \$50 a day to its selectmen. Let us honor the heroic endurance of the fathers, while we also cherish with pride the valor of their sons, our brothers, who responded nobly to the call of the nation, when threatened with disunion. For it is to be said that in the later struggle this town did its full duty. At the close the town stood credited with twelve more men than the State had required. It is true that some of them were not its own citizens, but hired substitutes; but it is also true that from these farms and hamlets enough perhaps to balance the hired contingent went into Rhode Island regiments and batteries. Your rebellion record contains the names of one hundred and thirty soldiers who went from or who were hired by and for this town.

Your sons were widely scattered among our State organizations and were in all branches of the service. One or another of them faced the nation's foes on most of the battlefields of the Atlantic slope and of the Gulf. They helped

to roll back the haughty and desperate tide of rebel invasion that was twice shattered on the glorious fields of Antietam and of Gettysburg. They fought with Hooker at Chancellorsville, with Burnside at Fredericksburg, with Sheridan in the Shenandoah. They were with McClellan in his march to Richmond by the bloody peninsula, and they followed Grant through the Wilderness and beyond, to Richmond and to Appomattox. Others of them shared the fortunes of the forces which captured the coast and river cities of the Confederacy, and raised the blockade of the Mississippi. Every man had his story. Each looked armed battalions in the face and sustained the hostile shock of the assault. They heard the whistle of the rifle ball which was seeking their life, the shriek of the exploding shell, the clatter of galloping squadrons, the clash of sabres, the roar of the cannonade, the cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, the mournful dirge over the dead. The blood of some of them was shed, and that of them all was offered, in defense of the Union. Some languished and died in hospitals or Southern prisons.

“When can their glory fade?”

Write down, so that your children of coming time may read, the story of their sacrifices, who perished of diseases consequent upon the experiences of camp and field. Such Swansea men were Daniel Tompkins, Frank R. Chase, Stephen Collins, William H. Hamlin, Martin L. Miller, Charles H. Eddy, Josephus T. Peck, Joseph Whalen, Captain Edwin K. Sherman, all of whom by death in hospital made a soldier's greatest sacrifice.

Look at the roll of the slain : Andrew S. Lawton, a leg shattered at the battle of Williamsburg early in the Peninsula campaign, and dying within a few hours. Joseph T. Bosworth of a Rhode Island battery, killed on the bloody field

of Antietam by an exploding shell. Oliver R. Walton slain when the war was far advanced, at the battle of Winchester in the Shenandoah, after nearly three years service. Edward G. West, like Lawton, a member of the Bristol county regiment raised by Gen. Couch, which followed the varying fortunes of the Army of the Potomac and shared its experience of battle and of blood. Early in the victorious but costly campaign in the Wilderness, West paid the price of his patriotism by a soldier's death. Mark the heroism, the valor, the Christian resignation of Alfred G. Gardner, of Battery B. of Rhode Island, who at the battle of Gettysburg fell beside his gun, with his arm and shoulder torn away. With the other he took from his pocket his Testament and other articles and said, "Give them to my wife and tell her that I died happy," and with the words of the soldier's battle hymn, "Glory, glory hallelujah," on his lips, his soul went marching on—a striking illustration of the spirit which breathes in the immortal words of Horace,

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.

Who can forget the deeds of such men? Let their names be written on the enduring granite of the memorial shaft or tablet, on the page of the historic record, and on the hearts of their grateful countrymen. And let all who, on the blood-red field offered their bodies a target to the enemy's assault, whose deeds of daring and self-devotion we cannot here recite, be also held worthy of our undying gratitude.

An address on an occasion like this can at best do but scant justice to a history such as that of which Swansea can boast. The deeds of these two and a quarter centuries deserve elaborate record. Let it be one of the offices of the Library Association, for whose literary stores and work ample provision has been made within these walls, to gather

all that has been or may yet be written of Swansea, to cultivate the taste for historic research, and to collect and preserve such memorials as will illustrate the past and perpetuate its fame.

The past is fixed and is amply worthy of record. But what of the undetermined and oncoming future? Will it reach the height of the standard set by the achievement of days gone by? Will it display equal or superior fidelity to the eternal principles which alone make a community strong? Will the men of to-day and of to-morrow, for whose use this structure has been reared, rise to the level of their history and their high privilege? Let them emulate the example of the brave and godly fathers of the town who laid its foundations in righteousness and in piety—foundations more imperishable than the solid boulders which have been built into these massive walls.

The oration of Mr. Brayton was followed by brief addresses by Jonathan M. Wood, Esq., of Fall River, Maj. James Brown of Taunton, and Hon. E. L. Barney of New Bedford, all natives of Swansea, who have distinguished themselves in Bristol county as honored members of the legal profession.

The president, in presenting the next speaker, said:—I have the honor of introducing to you Jonathan M. Wood, Esq., of Fall River. It may not be out of place to remark that Mr. Wood is one of four brothers, natives of Swansea. In the war of the rebellion his three brothers served respectively in the cavalry, infantry and navy. Each in his department did faithful service. One was severely wounded and taken prisoner at the battle of Pittsburg Landing.

ADDRESS

OF JONATHAN M. WOOD, ESQ., OF FALL RIVER.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

I have a right to claim Swansea as my birthplace, for on the western hillside, where linger the last rays of the setting sun, in the centre of a hundred acre farm, near the old brick mansion house, is the old family burial ground where sleep six generations of ancestors and kindred. And there was plenty of room for the progeny to multiply, for until within a few years there were five contiguous farms in the family name.

The place of my birth being one of the reasons of the honor done me to-day, I may be indulged in referring to ancestral lineage, for few families, even in this ancient town, can trace a longer continuous line of ownership and residence on the same farms, and within its borders ; and to-day one of your citizens is of the eighth generation, still continuing the farm and the old mill in the family name. And the old mill flume repeats the murmurs of more than two hundred years ago :

“That mill will never grind again
With the water that has passed.”

In common with many of the citizens, my first impressions were formed in Swansea, in the toil of the field, and that best of all schools,—the old district school,—the influence of which upon the public mind as far surpasses that of

the higher institutions of learning, as the impressions of youth are more lasting than those of later life.

Swansea is more than twice as old as the government itself of which it forms a part. More than half of its political existence as a municipal corporation was passed in colonial days.

A reference to its map shows the inconsistency of grants and charters. It would seem that, for some reason, in the adjustment of boundary lines, Swansea got piqued and in retaliation made a sharp point on Barrington, Seekonk and Rehoboth. The same irregularity appears also on the eastern boundary. Until recently one could not drive between North and South Somerset without getting one wheel into Swansea. The shape of the town shows that even in old times things were not always done on the square.

Swansea is fortunate in her natural location, her rivers, her fisheries, her clam shores. It is a high recommendation of a town to have good roads. This title to favor Swansea can claim. Good roads are a source of wealth. Even the hundred years old walls, though not horse high, bull stout and hog tight, are yet so far serviceable that they never allow the claim of a fraudulent title to pass over them.

Swansea has contributed liberally to peopling the far west. She has sent forth to the cities some of the best mechanics and builders in the land. Her sailors and commanders have been upon every sea ; and her merchants to all parts of the world.

In her sacrifices for the country on sea and land, in bloody battle, in hospitals, in rebel prisons, in glorious graves and in widows' and orphans' homes, her record has been most honorable.

In most of the Western States, a township means, not a municipal organization but thirty-six square miles of land, in sections of one square mile. In New England a town has greater powers than anywhere else in the Union. A town

here is a small republic,—a municipal corporation, possessing political powers. The people tax themselves ; make their own appropriations for highways, for the support of schools, paupers and police. They choose their own town officers, selectmen, assessors, collectors, school officers and the like. The town meeting is their legislature, and every voter a member ; every voter has a voice in more than three fourths of all the laws he lives under in the land.

This building has been given to the town of Swansea. The gift is the greater because by a citizen of the town, and it is dedicated to the noblest purpose in a free government.

The citizens will meet here in free town meetings, and their children after them. Under the constitution of our State it is their right also peaceably to meet and discuss public questions, to instruct their representatives and to petition to those in office for redress of grievances.

Free schools, free churches, the free town meeting and free discussion, have been, as we hope they will continue to be, the promoters of a citizenship worthy of the town and this great republic.

Let us all hope that not only the years, but the centuries shall be many before the people of the town of Swansea, with its hills and its valleys, its rocks and its rivers, shall enjoy less blessings than those that flow from free schools, free town meetings, and happy homes.

ADDRESS

OF MAJOR JAMES BROWN.

Introducing Major James Brown of Taunton, the president said he was the first native inhabitant of Swansea to graduate from a college, and was highest in rank of Swansea's sons who participated in the civil war. His response was substantially as follows :

Mr. President :—

I thank you for your highly complimentary introduction. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, directly in front of me, across the street, not three hundred feet from where I stand is the place of my birth. The old two-story house is gone, and a beautiful cottage has taken its place. The big willow tree that stood in the corner of the yard, the pear tree and the apple trees are gone, but I revere the spot, and I love my native village with greater intensity as the years roll by. Memory of the playmates of my childhood, the pleasures of youth, and the steadfast friendships here of maturer years bind me to you as with "hooks of steel." I have always been proud to say I was born in the ancient town of Swansea. I firmly believe that breathing its health-giving air during my childhood and early youth contributed

largely to the robust health I have always enjoyed. My ancestors from the earliest colonial times—seven generations—were tillers of the soil in the town of Swansea. They were farmers, and as a farmer boy I lived and toiled among you. I cannot claim that I took to its duties with that avidity which evinced a strong and abiding love for ploughing and planting during the cold days of the spring, pulling weeds and hoeing in the early summer days, pulling potato vines and onions in August and September, together with milking the cows at sunrise and again at sunset, and the other varied duties of a farmer boy.

I am introduced here as the first native inhabitant of Swansea to graduate from a college. My home was here until I was admitted to the bar just before I was 24 years of age. A man's surroundings have great influence in determining his course of life. In my childhood and early youth religious polemics were the order of the day. The Methodists discussed doctrinal points with Baptists, and the Universalists with both the others. In passing let me remark that there never was a Congregational Society in the town of Swansea. Nothing but Baptist meeting-houses had been built within its present limits. The beautiful edifice of the Episcopal Church was erected when I was well advanced in my youth. The Union meeting-house, as has been said by the orator of the day, was on the site of the building we now dedicate. My father's house, directly opposite, was a common resort for Methodists, Baptists and Universalist ministers. My parents received and entertained them in a most hospitable manner, and I heard much of their discussions. I listened to their arguments as I grew older, and begun to take part in their discussions at an early age, involving a thorough study of the Bible, and a familiarity with its doctrinal passages, together with a study of the controversial books, a few of which were within my reach.

Then came the old debating society. The Hon. John S. Brayton, the orator of the day, as well as myself attended it, as its youngest members. Among them were the Rev. Benjamin H. Chace and Hon. Daniel Wilbur, who sit here on this platform with us to-day; there was Royal Chace of Swansea, one of the most brilliant and gifted young men among us; there were also Peleg S. Gardner, Avery P. Slade and Benjamin G. Chace of Somerset, Edward F. Gardner of Swansea, and Nathaniel B. Horton of Rehoboth, and others I do not at this moment recall; but I must not omit to mention that our records were kept, regularly read, and signed by Joseph Shove, clerk.

The meetings we held in this village, Somerset town-house, Swansea Factory, Rehoboth and elsewhere, were always well attended and excited the most lively interest. Political questions, involving research of history, biography, and the writings and speeches of great men, were frequently discussed. The question "Does man act from necessity or from free will?" excited deep interest. These discussions were great incentives to study, and awakened a desire for a solid and thorough education.

I then conceived the idea of going to college. My father, with a good and well-stocked farm, could not afford to pay the expense of two years preparation and four years sojourn in college. I doubt whether there was then a farmer in Swansea that could, from the profits of his farm. I was told that I could have a comfortable home there, and I always did. My dear mother ever afterwards did all she could (and more than she ought) in caring for my wants during the struggle that followed. My father was always ready to lend a helping hand.

After teaching school, boarding round, four months at \$15 per month in the Nathaniel Mason district in Somerset, John S. Brayton and I entered Pierce Academy at Middle-

boro during the last week of March 1846, and we chummed together, paying \$1.75 per week for our board and washing. Before then I had never seen a Latin or a Greek grammar, and I think my chum had not, though he did not then begin to prepare for college. In June 1850, I had passed my final examinations, and received my degree of Bachelor of Arts at the Annual Commencement at Brown University in September. My labors during the first two or three years in college commenced at half past four in the morning; by lamp-light during the frosts of winter, and when the birds began to sing in the spring, and by daylight in the early summer. Yes, my friends, it was work—constant, continuous work,—work with a free will. It might be said the task was accomplished so soon, by necessity of earning the means as I went along. I taught school fifty-four weeks during the time. My friends, you are acquainted with my life since, and know how dearly I have loved to visit old Swansea during the years that have followed.

But, Mr. President, you introduced me also as the highest in rank of Swansea's sons who participated in the civil war. I was not aware of this. I am proud to say that having belonged to a company of the volunteer militia for five or six years prior to the civil war, playing soldier for fun, upon call of the Governor April 16, 1861, I went with my company (G. 4th Regt.) as corporal, and had the good fortune, as right company of the regimental line, to be a part of the first company of organized troops that trod upon rebel soil, and subsequently to be in the first organized duly planned battle of the rebellion between organized troops, that of Big Bethel, June 10, 1861. The fact that I afterwards became a field officer and rode on horseback, you have alluded to. Every man, officer or private who went forth to do battle in that conflict and performed his duty, came home justly proud that he went. If I have added

anything to the laurels of the sons of old Swansea, I am rejoiced indeed.

Swansea Village was my home. It has changed, greatly changed during the last forty years. As a business locality, except at the old paper mill, it no longer exists. In 1840 in this village there were no less than five places where shoe-making was carried on as an active and remunerative industry, employing some fifteen to eighteen men. Now as a regular business it is not carried on at all, and in fact there is no active mechanical or manufacturing business here. The same is true of the neighborhood of Swansea Factory, where my maternal grandfather, Benajah Mason, carried on an extensive business as a tanner, currier and a manufacturer of boots and shoes, employing a dozen or more men according to the season. That has passed away, as well as Swansea Factory itself, once a flourishing manufactory within two miles of this village. What has been the cause of this change? It was not from lack of enterprise here, but it is to be found in the superior advantages of the then small villages, through which the lines of railroad were run. With better facilities for transportation they started forward and soon left the outlying villages far in the rear. Stagnation soon commenced, and the result was an abandonment of all mechanical or manufacturing industry where a railroad station was not near at hand. Brockton and other villages, now cities, have grown with phenomenal rapidity, and the old familiar landmarks known to the village boy of forty or fifty years ago are covered with big blocks built of brick and mortar, and the peaceful quiet of the country village is disturbed by the rattling of machinery, the hum of business, and the crowding of people in the streets.

Now, my friends, so far as I am concerned, I am glad that Swansea Village remains as she is. It is selfish, I know, but it is a selfishness engendered from a love of the old

scenes as they were in my boyhood. Nearly every dwelling-house and shop are still standing. The trees on the street planted by the villagers some fifty years ago, (Rev. Benjamin H. Chace leading in the enterprise) have justified the predictions of those who toiled to put them in their places. The residence of Mr. Stevens, with its beautiful grounds and surroundings add new attractions to our beloved village. It is truly the most charming rural retreat in this section of the State. When Mr. Stevens first came here with his wife, some thirty odd years ago, the thought did not occur to him that this might become his permanent home. Leading, as he had, an active and busy life, full of adventure and excitement, it was not natural for us to even hope that he would settle down and become a citizen of the ancient town of Swansea. But the place grew upon him. He began to love it and the people, and they in return loved him and his. They learned to respect him and be guided by his counsels. He has been a leader among business men and in the councils of the State. The name of Frank S. Stevens has long been a synonym for all that is good, noble and generous in thought or deed. This beautiful building, which we dedicate to-day is a tribute of love from him to the people among whom he has cast his lot. How many of us may envy him. In the dreams of our youth we may have looked forward to the time when we might be author of some substantial benefaction to the people of the place where we were born. That dream is seldom realized. Mr. Stevens is not "native and to the manor born," like many of us. He did not play as a child in the street, here, as we did. He did not mingle with us, as boys and girls together, and have impressed upon him scenes that last for a lifetime. Here he cannot say with us,

“ How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood
When fond recollection presents them to view,
The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood,
And ‘Abram’s Rock’ that my infancy knew.”

But he can say, "how dear to my heart are the place and the people with whom I have lived during the last generation of men. Happy is my home, where peace and affection abide. Respected and beloved of my fellow men, the heart's fondest wishes are satisfied."

If he has sorrows of mind or heart we know them not. To-day we know his heart must beat tumultuously in response to our grateful appreciation of this noble benefaction. This building, so unique in design, so perfect as a specimen of architecture, so well adapted to its purposes, will stand through the centuries as a monument perpetuating the memory of Frank S. Stevens. "Sculptured stone or ever 'during brass" could never attain that end so well as this beautiful and useful benefaction.

Mr. Gardner, in introducing the next speaker, said:—
In the very excellent historical address to which you have listened, honorable mention has been made of Mason Barney. I have the pleasure of introducing to you his grandson, the Hon. Edwin L. Barney of New Bedford. Mr. Barney is also a native of Swansea. His extensive law practice has not only made his name familiar in Southeastern Massachusetts, but also in other parts of the State.

ADDRESS

OF HON. EDWIN L. BARNEY OF NEW BEDFORD.

Ladies and Gentlemen of Swansea :

Not as a stranger coming into a land which he knows not, and where he is not known, but as a native among his old friends and neighbors, I join with you to-day. Although my labors are in other scenes, my coming here is not after many years and much wandering. It has been my good fortune to be near my old home all my life, and to visit it often. I feel that I know Swansea's people, not as old acquaintances merely, but as townsmen, fellow townsmen. I am proud of the town ; I am proud of her people. I rejoice to be present to-day and participate in this dedication. Not only the fact that we are here for the purpose of throwing open and accepting this grand building, is before us ; but the great generosity of the giver and the inestimable benefit of the gift appear to us, and you ought, and I think you do, fully appreciate them.

This edifice is worthy of its noble donor. It is beautiful in its architecture and complete in all its arrangements. Frank S. Stevens has shared his prosperity with you. He

has built for the people. As I stand here it occurs to me how wisely and judiciously he has made and constructed this house for the whole people ; with what fidelity to all has his plan been wrought out. This structure is not for one purpose only. Built to accommodate the various uses of town government, education and recreation, it is not too small for either, and is fully adequate for them all. Monumental to the liberality of the name of Stevens, this building shall no less stand symbolical of the loyalty of the good people who shall maintain and protect it.

This Town House is not of stone finished and trimmed by the skillful hand of the mechanic ; not huge blocks of granite or brick pressed to a severe smoothness ; not artificial or manufactured substance, but of the natural boulders that have lain for years in the soil, or marked the boundary lines of your forefathers ; rock upon rock, boulder upon boulder, does not the house they make, represent the natural solidity of character the building commemorates.

My friends, Mr. Stevens has been wise ; he has made a fitting combination of beauty and great utility in this bountiful work he has done for his adopted home. He has been generous, and with a lavish hand has made you partners of his good fortune. A monument to his honorable name, a standing tribute to good citizenship, and a light-house for future advancement, let this edifice be accepted by you. Here you, and future generations, can come to exercise the right of elective franchise, the highest political privilege of American citizenship. Within these walls you will elect and choose your town officers. This place shall be the scene of your balloting for State officers, and here you will manifest your choice for a President of the United States. Beautiful as is this building, so is the right to ballot as sacred.

In search of learning the young will come. From the volumes they can study political economy to guide them in their action as voters, or they can pore over the pages of history and science to aid them in their knowledge of the world in which they live. In fiction they can find a pastime ; in the graver works they can seek instruction. Confined to neither sex alone, it belongs to you all,—truly, in every sense of the words, it is the TOWN HOUSE. What noble acts may the walls echo !

How changed is all this from a century and more ago. If the dead could look down from the skies and see the work that is done upon the earth, what would old John Brown, or Major James Brown, Thomas Willett the first mayor of New York, Rev. John Myles the fighting pastor, John Myles his son, the first town clerk of Swansea, Samuel Myles the second pastor of King's Chapel, Boston, Rev. Samuel Luther, Hezekiah Luther, Hugh Cole, Thomas Easterbrooke, John Butterworth, Francis Stevens, and of more recent date Mason Barney, Thomas Peck, John Mason and a host of other immortal spirits, who used to walk these fields and gather in the old meeting house that stood upon this spot, what, I repeat, would they say ? Would they not rejoice with us ? Would they not delight in our good fortune ? I almost think that the redeemed and regenerate soul of King Philip would be touched in beholding the very stones his feet may have trod, in his wild and weird chase of the white man, two hundred and odd years ago, rising into a building on almost the very spot that English blood was first spilled in the Old Colony. Commemorative of Old Swansea, typical of the present progressive age, and exemplifying the open-heartedness of your leading citizen, this building shall stand through the years to come.

Of a family whose name is historical comes Frank S. Stevens. We find it often in the records of the Plymouth

and Massachusetts Colonies. As early as 1658 a Francis Stevens held property and had his residence in this town, and now 233 years afterwards we have with us a high-minded, liberal, patriotic and distinguished man of the same name, who worthily upholds the family distinction.

Ladies and gentlemen of Swansea, see to it that the purposes for which this pile was erected are not averted. Keep it as befits the honor of the town. Encourage its use by all. Do this and the future generations will be nobler, better, more independent and enlightened.

Adherence to high principles, fidelity to the causes of progress, patriotism and liberality, cannot fail to produce what Tennyson felt when he wrote,—

“ Yet I doubt not through the ages,
One increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened
With the process of the suns.”

The chairman then asked if there was any business before the meeting.

Mr. James H. Mason moved that the selectmen be requested to convey to the Hon. Frank Shaw Stevens the grateful thanks of the citizens of Swansea for his gift of this beautiful and commodious town hall; and that the proceedings of this meeting, together with this vote, be incorporated in the records of the town.

Mr. E. M. Thurston moved that a vote of thanks be extended to the Hon. John S. Brayton for his very interesting, instructive and valuable address; also, to Messrs. Wood, Brown and Barney for their interesting addresses, and that a copy of each address be requested for publication.

Both resolutions were adopted.

The interesting exercises were then brought to a close by the venerable Rev. Benjamin H. Chase, of Swansea, who pronounced a benediction.

The audience then dispersed ; many people took advantage to press to the platform and thank Mr. Stevens for his splendid gift, and Mr. Brayton for his magnificent address.

There were none in the audience more deeply interested in the proceedings than the special guests of the honored donor of the building :

Mrs. Louisa E. Stevens, of Cleveland, Ohio, mother of Hon. Frank S. Stevens ; Mr. N. C. Stevens, of Toledo, Ohio ; Mrs. A. K. Spencer, of Cleveland ; Mr. and Mrs. Geo. H. Allen, of New York ; Mrs. J. Barstow, of New York ; Mrs. F. Hoard and Miss H. M. Kelton, of Providence.

The ushers of the day, who performed their duties in a successful manner, were Messrs. Henry O. Wood, Nathan M. Wood, James Easterbrook, Mason Barney and Elijah P. Chase.

At the close of the exercises in the hall, the Swansea Brass Band gave an elaborate clambake, near the hall, and entertained a large crowd in a satisfactory manner.

APPENDIX I.

Deed.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that I, Frank S. Stevens of Swansey in the State of Massachusetts, in consideration of one dollar and other considerations to me paid by the Town of Swansey, a municipal corporation situate in the County of Bristol and State of Massachusetts aforesaid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby remise, release and forever quitclaim unto the said Town of Swansey the following lots of land situate in said Town. The first lot is bounded beginning at the southeast corner of the lot to be described on the northeasterly side of the highway, and running thence northerly by the fence, building, and wall now there, one hundred and two feet (102) by land of Elizabeth R. Stevens to a wall, thence westerly one hundred and sixty feet (160) by the burying ground and the wall as it now stands, to a wall and land of the heirs now or formerly of Mason B. Chase, thence southerly by said last named land and wall sixty-five feet (65) to the highway aforesaid, thence westerly by said highway one hundred and eighty-six feet (186) to the point of beginning, containing by estimation fifty-five rods more or less. Said tract of land is subject to a right of way to and from the highway and the burying ground.

Also, one other lot of land situate in said Swansea and bounded beginning at the southwest corner of the lot to be conveyed, thence running by the wall forty feet to the passway, thence northerly by said passway to the lot formerly occupied by John Mason, Esq., thence west by said Mason lot to the wall, and thence by the wall to the first named corner, being the lot conveyed to me by John S. Sprague by deed dated June 16th, 1890.

Also, one other lot of land situate in said Swansea and next to the lot last described above, and bounded beginning at the southeast corner thereof by the lot first described above, thence running northerly by the wall twenty-four (24) feet for a corner, thence westerly by a lot now or formerly owned or occupied by Richard Chase to the center of the path, forty-four feet (44), thence southerly by said path twenty-four feet (24) to a wall, thence easterly by said wall forty-four feet to the point of beginning, being the lot conveyed to me by William H. Chase and others by deed dated June 25th, 1890.

This conveyance is made upon the express and precedent conditions that the building which said Frank S. Stevens is erecting or has erected upon said land for a Town Hall and Public Library, and which is conveyed by him as a free gift to said Town as part of the premises included in this conveyance, shall be devoted to public purposes and forever used as a Town Hall and Public Library by the inhabitants of said Swansea; that the room designed for the use of a Public Library shall be used, rent free, for library purposes by the organization known as the Swansea Public Library, or such other library as may succeed to or take the place of the same, and that any Christian denomination desiring the use of said Town Hall for funeral services shall be allowed to use the same, subject to such equal and reasonable regulations as the Selectmen of said Town may prescribe.

To have and to hold the granted premises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to the said Town of Swansea and its successors and assigns, to their own use and behoof forever.

And I do hereby, for myself and my heirs, executors and administrators, covenant with the said grantee and its successors and assigns, that the granted premises are free from all incumbrances made or suffered by me, except the right of way aforesaid, and that I will, and my heirs, executors and administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the said grantee and its successors and assigns forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons claiming by, through, or under me, except said right of way, but against none other.

And for the consideration aforesaid I, Elizabeth R. Stevens, wife of said Frank S. Stevens, do hereby release unto the said grantee and its successors and assigns all right of or to both dower and homestead in the granted premises.

In witness whereof, we, the said Frank S. Stevens and Elizabeth R. Stevens, have hereunto set our hands and seals this twenty-third day of June, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one.

Signed, sealed and delivered	{	FRANK S. STEVENS.	(Seal.)
in presence of			
Andrew J. Jennings to F.S.S.			
N. C. Stevens to E. R. S.			
		ELIZABETH R. STEVENS.	(Seal.)

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Bristol ss. June 24, 1891. Then personally appeared the above-named Frank S. Stevens and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and deed, before me.

ANDREW J. JENNINGS,
Justice of the Peace.

APPENDIX II.

[Copy of a communication from the Newport correspondent of the Providence *Morning Star*, published in that paper on the 15th day of December, 1880.]

THE POTTER SCHOOL HOUSE.

The new school house to be erected and presented to the city by the trustees of Long Wharf, is to occupy 18,000 feet of land on Elm street, and the trustees have decided to christen it, "The Potter School House," for the following reason: In 1795, Simeon Potter of Swansea, Mass., made a free gift to the trustees of an estate owned by him near the wharf, which the following copy of Mr. Potter's letter, making the donation, will more fully explain:

SWANZEY, AUG. 16, 1795.

Messrs. George Gibbs and George Champlin:

Gentlemen:—I saw in the Boston *Centinel* a scheme of a lottery, for the laudable intention of re-building Long Wharf in Newport, the building a Hotel, and more especially establishing a Free School, which has determined me to make

a free gift of my estate on the point called Easton's Point, which came to me by way of mortgage, for a debt due from Hays and Pollock, if you will accept of it in trust to support a Free School forever, for the advantage of poor children of every denomination, and to be under the same regulations as you desired the Free School should be that you designed to erect. If you, gentlemen, will please to get a deed wrote agreeably to the intentions here manifested, I will sign and acknowledge the same, and send it to you for recording. I would only mention that if the situation is agreeable to you, the house and garden would do for a school-master, and the oil-house, which is large, might be fitted up for a school-house. This as you may think proper. There is no person here who understands writing such a deed, or I would have sent it to you completely executed.

I am, gentlemen, with respect,

Your very humble servant,

SIMEON POTTER.

It is needless to add that the gift was accepted and the property used as proposed, a free school having been maintained there for many years, or until the State, through the "School Fund Lottery," which many will remember as existing for many years, took charge of the education of its youth.

APPENDIX III.

THE NEW TOWN HALL.

The Town Hall, of which the cut on the frontispiece is an illustration, is the gift to the town of Swansea of Hon. Frank S. Stevens. The building is located upon a lot nearly opposite the residence of its donor. The dimensions of the land are 193x122 feet. It is placed about the center of the lot, some 30 feet back from the street, and its dimensions are 61x80 feet. The building is of rough field stones, taken from the walls on farms owned by Mr. Stevens, with Longmeadow brown-stone used for trimmings, all laid in pure Portland cement. The arched entrance seen in the cut, is eight feet in width and handsome blue-stone steps lead to the entrance. The vestibule is spacious, being a square room twelve feet four inches. Directly in front, to one entering this vestibule, are wide folding doors opening directly to the town hall. By the only condition of the donor this is to be open to every and any religious society desiring to hold funeral services there. The hall is a magnificent room, 40x50 feet, with recess for a stage 10x34 feet. The platform extends slightly into the

hall, and its dimensions are 16x30 feet. The hall is finished with a dado four feet high, and has a cove ceiling on all sides 16 feet above the floor, which height marks the tie beams of three ornamented trusses, $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart. The vaulted or dome ceiling, 29x13 feet, is designed to break sound waves and assure good acoustic properties. For further decoration the cove ceiling is broken by wooden ribs, forming panels three feet wide and the height of the cove around the hall. The finish is of hard pine, in shellac. The seating capacity of the hall is 500. On the west side a fire-proof vault for the town records is provided, lined with brick and with vaulted ceiling, with double steel doors. Besides the folding doors to the vestibule, similar doors open into the library and selectmen's rooms at the front of the building, thus increasing the capacity of the main hall, should occasion require. Heat is provided by furnace.

The southwest corner of the building is for the library and reading room. Book cases run the whole width of its walls and to the ceiling. The dimensions of the room are 23x18 feet exclusive of an alcove, 6x13, with open fireplace. Spacious window seats are provided at the front windows. The southeast corner is the selectmen's room, 18x20 feet, and opening into a circular stairway that leads to the bell deck and clock tower. A fireplace ornaments the east side of the room, and both this and the library are heated by grates sufficiently large for the purpose. Provision has been made whereby an extension can be made on the east for a room for kitchen purposes on festal occasions, though this was not contemplated in the original plan nor in the cut presented. This vestibule entrance formed by the tower is finished in brick, and in one of the sides a bronze tablet will be set suitably inscribing the gift and the purpose of the donor.

The perspective of the building, as seen by the illustration, is very pretty and pleasing. The style at once excites commendation from all who see it. It is nearer "rustic" than anything else, and the architect has evidently had ever in mind the location for which it was intended. The tower shown is 13 feet square and 56 feet high, and its roof is covered with red slate, while the roof of the main building is of dark blue. The tower, with its bell and clock, marks the memorial feature of the structure. A memorial tablet, cut from a slab of brown freestone, bears the inscription :

1890 PRESENTED TO THE TOWN OF SWANSEA, BY FRANK S. STEVENS.

One of Howard's best movement clocks has been furnished, and a fine-toned bell of 715 pounds weight accompanies it. It will be noted that the ornamentation of the building is all in front, the roof being kept plain, and so easily in repair. The front is ornate with brown stone and carving. The tower treatment, its rounded arches marking the Romanesque, is indeed picturesque, and the turret for the clock is a distinctive and important feature for this part of the tower. The chimney, for the library fireplace, is carried on the tower on the opposite side and as a balance to the clock turret, and rises to a height of 52 feet above grade. Another architectural feature to show that the tower is for a bell as well as for a clock is seen in the large opening below the clock, through which the bell will show, and the sound waves have nothing to check and subdue them.

As the building is only designed for the three rooms which have been described, a town hall, library and select-

men's room, there being no second story, the roof is designed in keeping with this fact. The large roof covers the large hall only, and the roofs are low over the other two rooms. And to make the alcove a distinctive architectural feature of the front it is marked by a steep gable, which also acts as a screen for the roof of it.

The building is piped for gas. Mr. J. Merrill Brown of Boston, was the architect, Mr. J. J. Highlands of Fall River, did the masonry, and Mr. Angus McDonald of Boston, the carpentry work.

APPENDIX VI.

FRANK SHAW STEVENS,

The donor of the town hall, was born in Rutland, Vermont, Aug. 6, 1827. He received a common school education, and at the age of seventeen entered a store in Westfield, N. Y., as a clerk. He served in this capacity four years, when the California gold fever excitement allured him to the great West, and he joined his fortunes with a company of Forty-niners for a trip across the great American Desert, in the spring of 1849. They left Omaha in May of that year for Sacramento, Cal., and reached their destination in the latter part of August. Mr. Stevens did not like the life or the work of a miner, and soon gave up this business for something more to his liking. He entered into partnership with Mr. Henry Durfee, for the purpose of hauling goods and provisions to the miners and travellers in the mountains. The enterprise was proving to be a profitable one when high water came on and they were obliged to give it up. He then successfully engaged in the restaurant business and afterwards ran a stage line from Sacramento to Placerville. In 1854 all the stage lines in California united to form the California Stage Company, and Mr. Stevens was chosen vice president, having charge of one of the most important divisions until 1866. In the fall of 1858 he came to Wash-

ington, D. C., to look after the interests of his company, and made several trips to and from California from that time to 1866.

In 1858 he visited Swansea for the first time, and in 1866 he settled in the town which has since been his home. In 1862, he became a member of the firm of Paris, Allen & Co., of New York. Mr. Allen died about a year ago and Mr. Paris died September 2, 1891.

Mr. Stevens has been prominently identified with the business interests of Fall River for nearly a quarter of a century, and at the present time is president of the Globe Street Railway Co., president of the Fall River Merino Co., vice president of the Metacomet National Bank, and a director in the following corporations: Bourne mills, Chase Elevator Co., Edison Electric Illuminating Co., Fall River Electric Lighting Co., Fall River and Providence Steamboat Co., Granite mills, Mechanics mills, Osborn mills, Richard Borden mills, Slade mills and the Stafford mills.

Up to the opening of the war of the rebellion Mr. Stevens was a Democrat, but since that time he has been actively identified with the Republican party. He was a member of the Republican State Central Committee from this district for several years, and in 1884 was a member of the State Senate, declining a re-election the next year.

He was a delegate to the National Republican conventions of 1884 and 1888.

Mr. Stevens has been twice married. In July, 1858, he married Julia A. B., widow of James E. Birch, of Swansea. She died in February, 1871, and on April 22d, 1873, he married Miss Elizabeth R. Case, of Swansea. He is an attendant and supporter of the Protestant Episcopal church of Swansea. His farm is one of the finest in the vicinity of Fall River, and is well stocked with fine horses and a large herd of pure Jersey cattle.

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